

SIERRA CLUB
BEAR CREEK BASE CAMP
July 4 - July 17-'54

Reactions from readers of my previous journals indicate I take too much for granted so this will probably turn out to be a too detailed account of another short season of living as we humans were designed to live.

"The Sierra Club outings are cooperative enterprises and each person partaking of the benefits assumes his share of the responsibilities, both financial and for help on the trip. Outings are open only to members of the Sierra Club, applicants for membership or members of similar clubs.

"Since the trips are fairly strenuous, a physical examination is strongly advised."

These quotes from the Bulletin of March 1954 announcing the various outings show that the committees who do the work of planning and organizing the expeditions try their darndest to warn members of what to expect.

Historically, as I understand it, the outings of the Sierra club of longest standing are the High Trips, which do not have a Base Camp but move camp every other day or so and emerge from the wilderness at a different point than their entry. These trips are rugged, and usually maintain a higher altitude in the Sierra.

Here ensues a resume of what I think has happened and many corrections may be due but the general idea is correct. Sometime in the 1930's Oliver Kehrlein, a mining engineer with the State of California Safety Commission, began organizing what are now known as Base Camps, where members enter the wilderness area and establish a Base Camp whence all trips start and end during the period the base is used.

Field stoves are carried in on pack trains and a general commissary set up which includes a "refrigerator" - cooled by snow in a pit for the meats, tents for stores, and a First Aid set-up for emergencies. All trace of this establishment is removed when the last campers go out. This means breaking up fireplaces, burning, smashing and burying tin cans, and restoring the terrain to its appearance when the site was chosen. No wonder the bulletin advises each person must assume his share of work. Commissary is manned by one specific cook and several helpers, and "can do" people. A Doctor or two usually accompany the group.

Thus briefly the base camp - and all the rest of these pages could detail the amount of work done before members even arrive, and even after most of them go -

All of which seems to ignore the tremendous burden borne by Oliver.

This from my "private" journal goes to all kinds of barbarous people who don't have sense enough to "climb the mountains" -

*Fay
The Hunsors*

Only such a personality could bear it - and we love to let him do so. Planning next year's site, corresponding all year with members far and wide, appointing commissariats, hoping and praying against what actually happened this year re: MD's, and just plain grinding all the cogs on the wheel so that in action, all will go smoothly. Could money buy this? Only the love of the mountains and concern for others who love them can inspire the terrific labor involved.

In 1954 the Club announced 23 different outings, and I of course was much intrigued by a "High" Trip through the Grand Tetons in Wyoming, and made my reservation. It was Margaret Conant's year to go back east and it was odd to plan a trip like this without my usual companion on the trail. Then I discovered the trip in Wyoming would go in to Glacier National Park for another week and in all the entire expedition would be gone about four weeks. I couldn't afford this in 1954 so changed my reservation to the Bear Creek Base Camp. I shall never regret it.

In April and May or June I had a couple of climbs in the San Jacinto mountains and in Cuyamaca State Park in San Diego County as boot warmers for the trip, and contacted my friends from the incomparable San Diego chapter who also were going to Bear Creek. My mentor, Marion Miller, was thus subjected to about three months of valuable preparation for the "same old thing." I spent one Sunday afternoon making "billy cans" out of 2# coffee cans so we would not have to wait so long at Base Camp (billy cans are made from #10 cans emptied in Base Camp and you have to get on a waiting list when you go to the first session and sometimes a week might ensue before you have a billy can for your own camp site.)

One day our neighbor Edna Ford was talking with us and I of course could talk about nothing but my forthcoming trip and suggested it would be a wonderful thing for Edna and Albert's 17 year old daughter Roberta, who hikes with her dad around the local peaks. Edna was willing, and I dashed off a note to Oliver requesting permission to bring my friend. Typically, he wrote back that if I thought she was OK, he did too - and enclosed a signed application blank for Roberta, who thus was sponsored by one who to me typifies the Sierra Club.

Roberta, in the throes of graduation from High School, had little time during June to devote to plans, purchases and preparations, so her dad and mother were the ones who inflated air mattresses, stowed and weighed dunnage etc. etc.

En fin the two of us started out on the morning of July 2, and about 10 o'clock started Swinglow, my sweet chariot, out over the Mojave to the Tehachapi pass, and through the warm central valley on 99. A stop in the afternoon at Tagus Ranch for Boysenberry Sundaes strengthened us enough to continue up

Toll House (Shaver) grade to Shaver Lake, where we found a little cottage on a hill above the lake and decided to spend the nite.

Shaver Lake is about 5500-6000' and a gem of a lake - made by a dam. We rented a little rowboat and Roberta rowed around the near shore line and we watched a water skier tear around in a flash of spray. Decided to dine in style on Edna's gift so went in to the lodge about 7:30 and ordered dinner. That is, we ordered about 8:15 when the completely disorganized waitress realized we were not part of the building itself. Every time she came near the table she apologized profusely for delay, confusion and all that, then went running off in all directions getting no-where. We were not in a hurry so it was all funny to us, and after our dessert, which came about 10 p.m., we were ready to use our shower and plop into bed.

I still was not looking forward to the rest of the climb in the car to the pack station, and Roberta woke me in the morning with a cup of coffee in bed! which helped me wake up to the rest of the drive. We got off and up to Lake Shore Lodge on Huntington Lake in time to sneak in to their dining room for breakfast just at 9:30. Then we poked around the store getting what we hoped would do for lunch on the trail Sunday and for supper at the pack station Saturday night.

I had told Roberta the story of Aunty Ethel's kids heeding her admonition to "sit back and enjoy this ride" by saying "Enjoy! Enjoy! Enjoy!" all the rest of their drive, so when, on Kaiser Pass (9300') driving between Huntington Lake and the pack station at Mono Hot Springs, we got our first fabulous view of the high Sierra itself, that's what Roberta said - "Enjoy, Enjoy, Enjoy."

We stowed swinglow X on as level a spot as we could find at the pack station so we could sleep on her rear deck that night. Then came a leisurely afternoon and supper, having reunions with friends. Always at the pack station Oliver has charge of campfire and indoctrinates the group with caution, instructions and all that. We heard then that the route was changed and the trip would be 13 or 14 miles, from 6700' to 9600'. They had tried to get the builders of Vermilion Dam to convoy us to Bear Creek Dam in a 6x6 or some heavy equipment, but a phone call to their legal department could not clear the plan-so we just had to walk a little farther. Bill Evans and Oliver had walked two routes to select the best one in, and we had a nice reunion with Bill and Murphy (Ethel, his wife) Evans at their temporary camp at Mono Hot Springs where they were trying to store up baths against the time to come.

Privately that night I heard about the two doctors who had been scheduled to come for this period - shall we say not being "able" to come, and that first aid would have to be manned by any who had had Instructor's courses. That put me in, and I was happy to have Dorothy Parker, a High Tripper, in charge of

the detail and make myself available to her in case of need. We therefore set up hours of 4:40 to 5:30 at Base Camp, adjacent to the First Aid tent, and for the most part I just stood by in case she needed assistance with a splint or a half nelson. As it turned out we had no casualties, just the usual dirty foot blisters and occasional splinters and people worrying about the dust in their noses and also, as in Dr. Richard Rihn's resume of Mountain Sickness (Base Camp Book, 1953) people just wanting someone else to pull off the sticky band aid or hold their hand or even look solicitous. I shuddered every time a dead tree was felled for fire wood around base camp, but we had such an extraordinarily good bunch we had no accidents beyond the one on the way in which I will describe later.

Either the usual doughnuts did not come in or some slip happened - at any rate we did not have an adequate breakfast in the morning. We had eaten dinner at a little log cabin restaurant at Mono Hot Springs the night before and it took simply hours to eat and we could not spend the time on the morning of the big trek. Actually of course almost any of us would be able to take it, using our "humps" like the camel for energy to get there. We took six or seven cars, full of people, up the Vermillion Dam road to a point selected for parking, and the horseback riders started from pack station itself, so they had about 19 miles. From the cars we went right up a 700' pitch, and I wish I could remember the word - oh, yes, diocious stops were explained - the boys wait, the girls go ahead on the trail and everybody joins together farther ahead on the trail when ready.

Down the other side of this pitch to Bear Creek we were warned of rattlesnakes and proceeded cautiously, not, thank goodness, seeing a one. Rest stops and eating stops were very much planned as this was to be a grind. I think we must have started walking about 7 or 7:30. Ivy (5') Foster, San Diego, was full of the old nick as usual and sang to us hilariously on the trail --- at first. Once in a while we would just stop and look - because by this time we could see about where we were to go -

At a scheduled lunch stop - 1st lunch, I think it was called we went to the stream edge and Ivy lit her famous little billy can stove. As we sat there she had trouble opening a can of boned turkey so in helping her I managed to break her can opener. Tea and lemon do wonders at such brief stops, and we were about ready to proceed when the horse back riders came along the steep trail. We glanced up and noted that the saddle on one horse was slipped way back over his haunches. (Do horses have haunches?) Just as we remarked on it the trail went around a rock, sparing us the sight of Rachel Miller slipping with the saddle down off the back of the horse. Oliver took charge of the situation and someone took her some tea from Ivy's billy can. She was of course badly shocked but seemed not badly hurt, and a measure of her intestinal fortitude was shown by the fact she got back up on the horse and rode the rest of the way to camp.

To my knowledge this was the only accident of the trip. By mid-afternoon we were practically all reduced to Gerry Glass's prayer-"Lord, you lift 'em up, I'll put 'em down."

But finally came the last "short-cut" - a steep, much ducked way up over a ridge that was the edge of Base Camp itself, on the Hilgard branch of Bear Creek. Some of us felt like and, I understand, some of us, not excluding Ivy, went up this partly on hands and knees. Keith Dawson, 11 years old, was the first walking arrival.

A dismaying feature of Base Camp was the fact that girls were domiciled on a fabulously beautiful bench across the creek from commissary - across a log bridge, with a guide rope, over swiftly moving water. By the time I tumbled to this, Roberta's and my dunnage was over there already, and we gladly settled down on the very southern edge of the bench, probably 500' above Bear Creek, with huge boulders and rock sloping down to the John Muir trail. But our view was fantastic, and we huffed and puffed and blew our air mattresses up and stowed stuff so we could hit the sack as soon as civil after supper and camp-fire.

There was a girl's dormitory tent, and several individual tents, all located on our side of the creek, and above us on more bare benches the men had an undisturbed view of us and the other enticing scenery.

I remember little or nothing about the first camp fire and dinner. It was all good, of course, but our fatigue was such that the night was more important. It was cold on our bench, and the scary crossing of the creek decided us to move on Monday to a bench across the river and quite up from the camp fire site. This and hovering around 5' Foster who got a good case of mountain sickness or altitude lassitude that first night, took care of most of Monday. I remember 5' confessed she'd had to use the billy can I gave her for quite another purpose in her tent. I also remember that just as I was going to sleep I heard a stage whisper from my camp mate - "Ethel - are you asleep?" "No" "Enjoy! Enjoy! Enjoy!"

And some time early Monday I was approached by Oliver who said in a pseudo stern voice "What's the idea of demoralizing commissary?" All the boys in commissary were somewhat more than smitten by my camp mate. Consequently any time we moved after that we did not have to carry our dunnage.

Our Monday's camp sight left us with the same view but a great deal farther from the creek so that we'd have to carry water quite a piece. Ivy was recovering, and on Tuesday began to amble around- went over to Bill & Murphy's establishment in married couple's camp and got us invited to join them. So on Tuesday, I suppose it was, Roberta and I got ribbed about not

paying our rent because we moved again - this time to our permanent area - 'though of course we did move our dunnage around, and around the area we stayed in - because of rain and because we wanted to keep in practice.

we should have called Mt. Gab Murphy's Coffee Shoppe or Bar. Murphy keeps a billy can going all the time - and we were not unwilling camp mates of that gal. Her neighbors were Min (Minnow) and Lowry Wadsworth, and Rachel and 'Gene Miller. Ivy's tent was moved and stowed by Gerry Glass and Lowry, and soon Dorothy Parker moved over with us. So we had a happy family group as the pictures show.

Oliver had asked Ivy and me to MC the camp fires. There is a certain amount of routine stuff to be done every evening at campfire - distribution of billy cans, announcements of forthcoming trips and reports on the day's trips, fish count, lost and found, etc. Folks who lose things have to redeem them by song or story, and this is a very good way to get people out in front who might not otherwise do so. I evidently had done some MC-ing before Ivy came back on the scene, because on Tuesday or Wednesday night we planned a stunt that made anything we had to do afterward very easy.

I came out in front of the group in Ivy's jacket - my arms hanging out a foot, of course, and her hat perched on my 24 head like a peanut on a pachyderm. Hesitating, as if very unsure, I quavered that "Oliver had asked me, or so I thought, to MC the evening programs and I was of course willing to do what I could for the entertainment of the group but - - - at which point Ivy, in my red "horse blanket" and my arab hat, bounded out and indignantly said Oliver had asked her to MC and what did I mean by intruding etc. etc. I got down on my knees so I could hear her and in the ensuing free for all many gasps from the audience did not necessarily mean appreciation of our antics, but, as we were afterwards informed, fear that one of us would get conked on the melon-sized rocks that abounded in the area. The melee was climaxed by both of us exchanging clothes and I, prone, being not lightly sat on by Ivy - my grunt was not forced. This tickled all the boys of course and they said "Just like television!"

So Ivy MC'd that night. The next night we printed out our announcements in the notebook and read them in unison. After that we alternated. Some people pretended they thought we were really upset with each other the night of the wrestling match.

Although this was a small group (75 people) it happened to have some very interesting people in it, not the least of whom was Dee Simpson, assistant Curator of the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles, Glenn Dawson of Dawson's Book Shop in LA, etc. Dee was actually looking for artifacts of Indian residence in

the area and carried a fishpole so she could stand still and survey the scene without looking too restless. She gave a wonderful program one night on the archeological history of California and some of their difficulties in recognition on the national scene. Her description of the findings in Mission Canyon around San Diego and the fact that the latest scientific tests indicated the artifacts might be more than 23,000 years old had us all sitting up and taking notice. And she is so enthusiastic about her work that a natural contagion emanated through the group to look for any signs. I understand some were found though I did not see them.

Glenn Dawson talked about the Huntington library and some of the treasures there and how he has been called upon on occasion to assist in obtaining more.

Is this a good excuse for just being lazy?

We felt we reached a certain age of wisdom when we decided not to participate in the strenuous, large group expeditions, but go off in small groups. This paid off particularly the day Ivy, Gene Miller and I climbed the small hump to the north of camp, telling Murphy we'd be back by 12. The small hump of course had a much larger hump invisible behind it, and at 12 we were atop what we promptly termed "Milfosnel" and found it the best spot for getting oriented with a topographical map. There were three versions of its elevation - 11,200' - 11,700' and 11,900'. I think it was not more than 11,200'. We had an orange and some snow for refreshment while resting and photographing up there - and hoped the buck with the fine rocking chair on his head would come out and watch us as he had on the way up. He didn't. Our enthusiastic report of this "first ascent" (for this Base Camp it was, anyway) prompted others to go up too, and all agreed our climb was "worth the effort."

The next night I was taxed by my good Oliver thusly - "YOU SMOKE CHESTERFIELD⁵²?" "Yes." "KING SIZE?" "Yes." "I FOUND THIS ON MILFOSNEL." - showing me an empty package. I had held forth at campfire one night on messing up the area with matches, - refuse of any sort. And I had been thanked. So when Oliver put up this deal several of my friends said - "Not Ethel. I've seen her pick up stuff - but never drop it. Even takes burned matches back to her own camp fire - etc. Etc." Well, I knew I'd have to have a better answer than that so I looked Oliver in the eye and said - "How is the package opened?" He showed me, and my life was saved. I showed him the open pack in my pocket - a characteristic unmistakable, like the striking of a match. So I got out of that spot.

Edgar Kahn of San Francisco gave us some of the background material on his book "Cable Car Days." When I sat around the first aid tent to help Dorothy as needed he would read to me

from Emerson's Essays. This was good, as I did not take reading glasses at all - my poor abused eyes got a wonderful rest. One night Dot Coleman wasn't in when I thought she should be so I decided to worry about that a bit and went about asking people what to do. Edgar said "You and I will go down the trail together to look for her." Others said wait until six. She came in at six, having had a private journey to Selden Pass.

Roberta took all the trips, I think - including Lake Italy, which I had definitely intended to do. When we climbed Milfosnel (someone thinks I should explain this should-be-hyphenated name abbreviation Miller-Foster-Nelson) we had Recess Peak right in front of us, to the east - a little north of east, rather. Thus we knew that if it were not there we might almost look down into 2nd Recess - the site of Base Camp in 1953. We could see to the south the magnificent facade of the Seven Gables, with Julius Caesar looming up behind. And the rocky steep way to Lake Italy. Some of the folks who went to Lake Italy decided to stay the night and contour over to Stub Camp. Among them was Gerry Glass who left his 11 year old daughter in the care of the stay at homes. Same daughter, Ginny, was more or less ceremoniously dumped into Ivy's lap at campfire with the remark "She's your responsibility now" and Ivy had a night of it. In the middle of the night a not gentle pounding on Ivy's stomach - "I can't find my flashlight," yells Ginny, and I have to go to the burlap. Then when she came back she crawled into Ivy's sleeping bag because she was cold. We made other very definite arrangements for Ginny for the next night.

Well, didn't you?

Karen and Susan Dawson, 9 and 6, I think, sang "The Happy Wanderer" for campfire one night, and Ivy's auto harp then helped the crowd try to learn it. It became one of the theme songs, of course. Mary Helen Dawson, their mother, confessed to me at lunch one day that they had moved, too - over closer to a wide spot in the stream which made a wonderful swimming pool. I had had a couple of sitsbaths with Karen Sorenson in the stream in front of our camp but it seemed too awfully cold to swim in. I kind of got dared by Mary Helen, though, and finally one day went over to her camp and because she did and was there to pull me out if she wanted to, I slipped in to my waist from the edge of the pool and then swam over to the other side. It was terrific - not quite so cold as I'd thought, and of course so stimulating that it felt wonderful to get out, too!

Karen Sorenson told the classic at campfire one night - the reason the junipers are so twisted in their growth is that the owls cannot turn their heads very far but clamp themselves on the branches and watch the rodents scurrying round and round the tree on the ground below.

It should be understood that when the stream goes by com-

missary and is the only source of water, it is closed to bathers and swimmers before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. This is to assuage the delicate feelings of those who are not Mohammedans - as every good Mohammedan knows that water, once having flowed over seven stones, is clean. As far as I, a southern Californian am concerned, water is water. It was wet, too.

Along with the wisdom and contentment to stay in camp and just be there or take small jaunts as the spirit moves the flesh comes another characteristic which will undoubtedly date me. It is reminiscence. There is a spirit about group expeditions in the mountains which is almost indescribable, but reminds me most of a very distinct memory I have. My father, one suddenly stormy night at Lake Minnetonka, when I was very young, took the butterfly megaphone from an old talking machine that we had and called out to a flashing light out on the water "Are y'all right?" "Are y'all right?" And back faintly across the wild waves from those he thought in peril on the sea came an answering hail - that day's equivalent of OKAY - "All right - all right." Why this is connected with esprit de corps in the mountains may be vague - but papa would have gone to help them had he not been reassured, and so the mountain folk hail each other.

There was also a Dr. Popper, an astronomer, in camp who gave us a wonderful talk - experiencing the discomfort of trying to translate his extraordinary language to terms the motley group would understand. He did a good job, though, and another good job he did was apparent when I said to his 10 year old son Roger at breakfast one morning - "I like the name Roger, don't you?" He grinned at me and said "It's just right."

Newton Bell, World traveller and lecturer and obviously an expert on pennyroyal, gave us two programs on Africa - one on what to do if you met a giraffe on Hollywood Blvd. - etc. Keith Dawson became much concerned that Newton would speak only once but we kept our promise to have him speak again.

In the midst of a deluge at dinner one night - (the only real downpour we had - and where my ample rain pants came in very handy, by the way, even if I did have to have them on the outside of my parka to fasten them -) came Ned Thompson's stentorian voice from the cook stove - BRIGHTEN THE CORNER, WHERE YOU ARE - etc. etc. This was not the good Ned's only musical contribution. His preoccupation with the Salvation Army is only exceeded by his penuriousness - obviously, from the number of times he mentioned it, "a nickel on the drum" is all he donates. It could be expected he could spare more for a poor girl who now does nothing but beat that drum all day long. But of course his meals were incomparable, as usual - and the night we had chop suey he even had the MCs speaking Chinese.

Ivy spent one whole day cooking up a quiz program to be MCed by Bill Evans and Gerry Glass. The outcome was rigged - San Diego representatives were to win and the "outside world" to lose, whereupon the outside world would have to have a relay race of men dressing in women's clothes and women vice versa. The MisInformation Please questions were well planned and really informative but some of us, who thought the outcome should not be rigged, persuaded the judges to condemn San Diego to the relay race, win or lose. So we threw her that curve, and she came out of it anyway. The black top to her two piece swim suit made a wonderful sling shot in the hands of 'Gene Miller.

In desperation one night we gave the program ourselves, I introducing Ivy as Helen Traubel Foster - she's about as big as Traubel's left leg, and she being equally truthful about my identity. She sang, accompanying herself on the priceless piano (auto harp) and I repeated the story of dinner with the Sheika.

Meanwhile of course, people took trips and came back and reported, photographers photographed, artists arted, fishers fished, and some of us just sat around drinking tea and lemon and soaking in the scenery and washed clothes and made tents out of our tarps anent a threatened rain. Time passes too quickly, yet each day is so full that I could not bear, when the faintest tinge of dawn would show, to spend the time in bed, and often got up early and built myself a little fire and sat there watching the dawn. My fireplace was in Murphy's line of vision and she called my Indian gallop a panther walk.

One night after campfire, which we purposely tried to have over by 9:15 at the latest, and after the usual cup of hot cocoa Margaret Simcock, the girl with the Square egg laugh, and Bea Boyd and Ivy and I went up onto the meadow about 1/2 mile east of camp and built ourselves a tiny fire and lay on the rocks around it and watched the stars and the Hilgard facade showing moonlight before we could see the moon at all. While we were there a great rock must have fallen off the face of Hilgard and bounded down with seemingly endless echoes. I could not forget that Glenn Dawson had led a group down this face from the summit in order to get back in time for campfire the night he'd promised to speak on the Huntington library.

Pete Friedrichsen was awarded a trick knife with screwdriver and file and leather punch and very sharp blade and wire pullers and so on all in one tool, at campfire in appreciation of the innumerable and often unknown and unrecognized services he has always performed for Base Campers. It was given as from the whole group by some one connected with an engineering dept. who probably had it given to them by a vendor. Anyway it sure came in handy as Peter's Pliers had been missing for a long time and these could be Peter's Personal Pliers.

Stub Camp is an overnight hike from Base Camp to an area probably too distant to reach, round trip, in one day. Last year the pack animals came up and carried our dunnage up but we had to carry it back ourselves. This year the animals stayed overnight too. We had planned to take this trip but at the last minute decided not to go, so went around knocking ourselves out saying "Boy, am I glad I didn't go to stub camp!" - for days.

Before the Stub Campers came back we followed their trail which wound around the big unnamed mass south east of camp and into a spectacularly rocky little yosemite between that mass and the Seven Gables. We got to the place where the trail was most steep and decided it was time to make tea in case Dot Coleman came along, on the way home from stub. This was a camp set up for fishermen or hikers by the Forest Service and a note from Francis White - the Ranger who visited us last summer, was posted on a tree. Dot never did come along in the hour or so we were there so we had to drink her tea. This expedition was with Jean Love, Ivy and me - although we had started out with Edgar and Ken Kahn, Don Bull, Lowry Walworth and Gene Miller. They had crossed a log over Bear Creek which did not appeal to us so we stayed on the east side of Bear Creek and photographed. And Roberta - whom I should have photographed crossing that log.

By the first Tuesday in camp we decided we'd have to mutiny as tea bags had not been put out on the lunch table and in fact had not arrived from the pack station. Gerry said he was going to write a Scudder Nash type poem about being "5th Man On A Tea Bag." But praises be! they arrived before we were reduced to drying sage.

In spite of my being rather lazy I dropped 11 pounds somewhere along the way and am struggling to maintain the loss - or more.

During the 2nd week Oliver asked me if I minded if Jim Koontz went ahead to the parking area and drove my car down to the junction of the trail so's he could shuttle drivers back to their cars - IF I MINDED! I was delighted of course. Thus when I arrived at the junction there was my little swinglow- purring, and as it happened, in a pouring downpour.

One night at campfire we announced that Ivy would sing a solo - Rocked In The Cradle of The Deep. So she carried her piano out in front and laid it on the ground and the piano was not in the case, just rocks. This was true corn - but the fact was everyone then thought that it was stolen. What a night.

We called the family camp "Mount Gab." For the hat show at the last Friday's bandanna show Roberta made a model of Mt. Gab on her blue beaked cap. It won a prize for being most characteristic. Marion's blue furoshiki won a prize for being most classic in design. (It actually is a Japanese cotton with a chrysanthemum in the corner.)

The Dawson family hosted the Bandanna Show because they had a lovely area and a swim party could follow the show. Keith made a splendid causeway across a small stream so folks could get there without getting their feet wet.

Peter Raven, the 18 year old camp naturalist, - whose ability is only exceeded by the length and speed of his stride on the trail, and, I understand, by his appetite - needs to be known to be appreciated. I hope we always have him in camp with us.

John O'Neill from Philadelphia, who was with us in 1951 at Glen Aulin and then at Vogelsang the night Margaret and I spent on the ledge, told Lillie Stanley of Fresno chapter to needle me about that experience. Result, - as a price of her silence I have to send her a copy of this and of the ledge story. She is a darn good egg and we used her as a bird watcher to seek the Thompsonian Nodhatch which makes such frightful noises at breakfast and dinner times.

The Dawson children are the first third generation Sierra Club members I have ever met. (Organized 1892 - President from 1892 to 1914 - John Muir.)

Min Wadsworth was the only base camper I met who had blue lace pants. I went through two pairs of jeans at the gravel grinding points. One was a new pair - the other slightly ready to give - and give they gave on the way down to the pack station the last day, so I had to drape my sitting room with a bandanna.

The last night we MC'd Ivy asked Dee Simpson to announce that not only had they found artifacts but actually a lone survivor of the Bear Creek Mono Indians and said survivor had consented to sing for us. So Mary Rihn came down thru campfire area singing "Out of my lodge - at eventide -" and dressed as an Indian. It was really lovely. She kept right on going and the song faded in the distance. Dramatic. Then she came back having shed her Indian garb and sang "The Lord's Prayer".

The spirit of this bunch is best exemplified by the fact that when the first Base Campers (those in for the 1st time) gave their show, we could and did heckle them from the audience. This is the first time I've seen that happen.

The time had to come and it did for us to come back to civilization. Friday's bandanna show climaxed camp activities, and I, slightly under the weather, began to dread the hike out and the drive down that terrible grade. But like all my worries the actuality is not so bad. Friday night just before supper Ivy and I went over to the stream and finished a teaspoon each

of cognac, with lemon and Hilgard branch water. The 4 oz. I had taken up had all been used for medicinal purposes only. Then I had to go down to stand by at first aid. On my way over I ran into a friend who had received in that day's mail a package that sort of gurgled. We knew we couldn't have the pack train stand that on the way out so I tried to help out. Again I started for the first aid tent. Found Roberta near the coffee urn with her usual deluge of mail and so sat beside her contemplating the scene - aching because we had to leave it the next day.

Down the hill behind me came another beturbaned friend with the plaintive request that I help him find his wife. In so doing, I got so involved that I didn't get down to dinner until 'way after it was all gone. Ivy met us as we made our feeble way over to Mount Gab, and I suspecting that I had to attend campfire, asked her to get or make all the black coffee that she could. I downed three cups and went to campfire.

Oliver, intrepid soul, has to take charge of the last campfire too for instructions as to the next day's trip - etc. He was holding forth and then called me out in front where, with four or five others, I was awarded the cherished chalice - a polished cup. I remember a little difficulty in saying "I shall cherish it as I do my two silver hershey bars" - and holding the cup up and trying to get Ivy to come over, too. (She already had a polished cup). She says we got an ovation. I frankly think Oliver chose the two who would find it easiest to make fools of themselves as MCs and we didn't find it too difficult.

There was an old type cup found on a 13,000' peak where the last name in the cairn was dated 1939. I wanted that cup too and Walter Heninger, to whom it was given as if he had lost it, gave it to me. Our experimental lab has restored it to some extent but it needs to be tinned to fill in the holes where the rust had eaten through. I just love to touch it, it having been on the peak for probably 15 years.

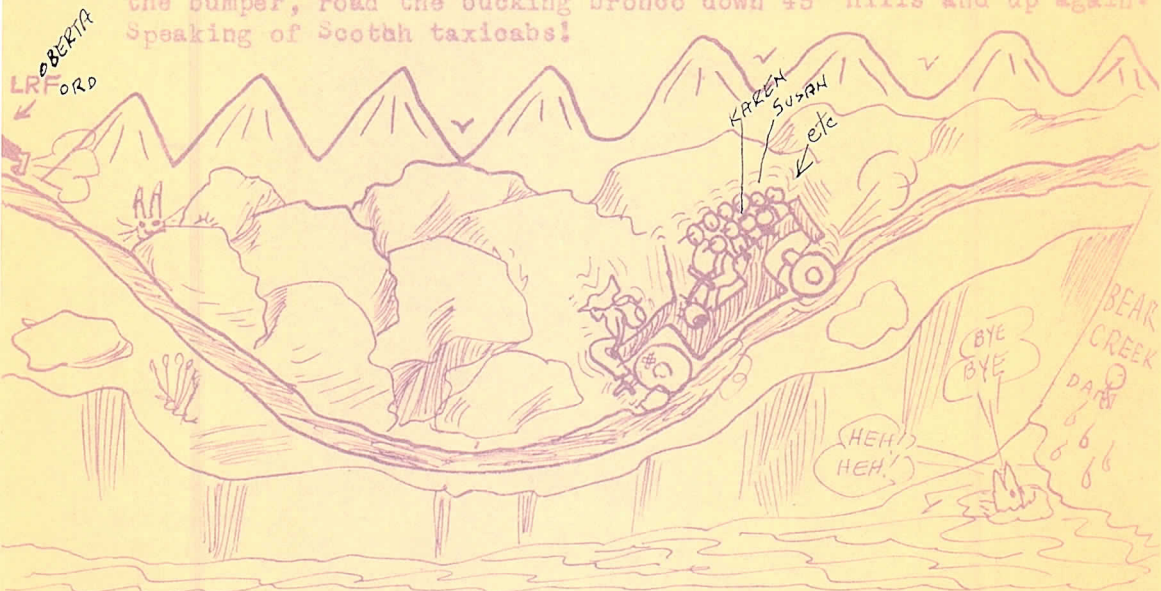
Being somewhat less than comfortable then that Friday night I crawled into my sleeping bag about 8:30 p.m. I awoke when Roberta came home and then at 3 a.m. had had to get up and down so many times I decided to stay up. So built a fire and found the value of saving squirrelings. I was starving to death and made myself some tea and ate some rather limp rye krisp that tasted like manna. Had to wake Roberta because it looked like rain and she, sound asleep, got out of her sack, took the rubber poncho and covered our packed dunnage with it, pulled the sack back under the protecting trees and climbing in, was gone again.

And so I watched the last gray dawn - a bright moon behind the clouds made it rather light. There were many pack animals all around our camp, defying the night with their hee haws. But

when I got up and built the fire they must have thought I was a packer and kept very quiet so I wouldn't come and saddle them.

A flurry and a scurry and everybody was up, we weighed and paid our excess dunnage and regular dunnage and ate breakfast and without saying goodbye even to Oliver whom we thought to see later in the day started down the long long trail at 7:30 a.m. Ivy and I poked - resting every hour and made tea twice - but still arrived at Bear Creek dam about noon. This must have been about 10 miles. There we saw the road and why we couldn't drive on it. We lay flat on a rock and put our feet up on another, watching gray clouds and patches of blue. Then we started out walking on the shale road. People began catching up with us.

Suddenly Shorty Cunningham was "going our way" in a jeep, and Ivy climbed in with Mary Helen, Keren and Susan and Keith Dawson, Mildred Carlson and Newton Bell. I sat on the right front of the hood and hooked what was left of my heels into the bumper, road the bucking bronco down 45° hills and up again. Speaking of Scotch taxicabs!



At the junction was Cliff Youngquist, leader of the second group. A sharp shower of rain made us scurry into waiting cars. Then I found out mine was there, so we crawled down into the pack station, arriving about 2 p.m. The more we saw of the 2nd group, to consist of about 175 people, the more we said "Boy are we glad we're not going to 2nd Base Camp!" The 75 was a perfect number. There were many folks we knew, of course, from other times, and we had quite an old home week. Dot Coleman had ridden down to spend the night and call her dad and was going back up for another week. From descriptions of the bathtubs at Mono Hot Springs (sulphur) I decided I could do without the hot bath. We agreed to rendezvous at Lake Shore lodge with Bea, Jean Love and Ivy, so Ivy could buy me the soda she bet me it

would rain when it didn't. No sodas, but coffee and ice cream helped. Roberta and I were not very happy to be leaving, but otherwise content. Agreed to rendezvous again at Tagus Ranch, just north of Tulare. Got there about 7:30 and much do about cars and the air conditioning not working in the counter area, went in to the formal, candlelit dining room in our hiking clothes. A numbskulled waitress earned no tip by taking more than two hours to serve us our dinner. It was hot and thick in the valley. We were convulsed by the smorgasbord where we had to go get our salads - and there was a big bowl of QIVERING DEATH! (Jello) After an eternity we got out of there and onto the hot road by 9:30.

Then the usual dip in and out of motels and finally I got huffy and said we would go on to Bakersfield and hoped to meet the gals there in the morning. Proceeded one block and found a good motel, to which the other three gals also got referred. So tandem we went - all showering and sleeping like logs for what was left of the night.

In the morning, drove 42 miles to El Rancho in Bakersfield for breakfast. This is a wonderful spot, and they had "The Happy Wanderer" on the juke box. After we had played it five times it suddenly stopped. Our waitress investigated and someone had pulled the plug, thinking the record had stuck. So she gave me another dime and we played it again. *We got slightly hysterical of course.*

A very warm ride then to Riverside, and about 1:30 we all descended on Marion. However, the San Diego dagoes would not stay for a sandwich which provoked me, but they did have 100 more miles and their driver, Bea, 60 more.

In somewhat less than 50 weeks we hope to go in from the east (desert) side to another first session of Base Camp - with not more than 75 or 100 people, and most of them the same ones we were with this year. Some year I'll stay the whole six weeks and never want to come out.

Walter F. Wilson

Anyway people try to say what they mean! Hope to see you at Harwood at least. — W

you should have been there!